

REMARKS

This application has been amended so as to place it in condition for allowance at the time of the next Official Action.

The Official Action rejects as unpatentable under 35 USC §103(a) the following sets of claims in view of the identified references:

Claims 6, 21, and 24 over AZAMI et al. in view of MATSUMOTO et al.; claims 8-11 over AZAMI et al. in view of MATSUMOTO et al., and further in view of the admitted prior art; claims 6, 7, 13, 21, 22, and 24 over KUDO et al. in view of MATSUMOTO et al.; and claims 8-11 over KUDO et al. in view of MATSUMOTO et al., and further in view of the admitted prior art.

The Official Action states, however, that claim 25 is allowed and claim 12 is allowable but for its dependence from a rejected base claim.

In order to place the present application into condition for allowance in as expedited a manner as possible, the applicant has amended claim 6 to incorporate the features of claim 10 and allowable claim 12. Such amendment necessarily places claim 6 into condition for immediate allowance in light of the stated allowability of claim 12, together with all claims that depend therefrom. Existing claims that ultimately depended from claim 6 and that would be inconsistent with amended claim 6 are canceled.

New claim 26 similarly recites the feature underlying the allowance and allowability of claims 25 and 12, respectively, namely the flare stopper and one of the lens elements being arranged so that one of the lens elements presses and deforms the flare stopper. New claims 27 and 28 depend from new independent claim 26.

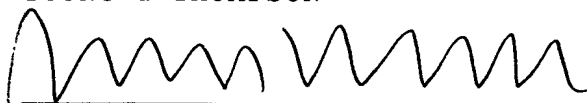
In light of the amendments provided above, particularly in light of the allowance of claim 25 and stated allowability of claim 12, applicant believes that the present application is in condition for immediate allowance, and an early indication of the same is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any questions or requires further clarification of any of the above points, the Examiner may contact the undersigned attorney so that this application may continue to be expeditiously advanced.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG & THOMPSON

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert J. Patch', written over a horizontal line.

Robert J. Patch, Reg. No. 17,355
745 South 23rd Street
Arlington, VA 22202
Telephone (703) 521-2297
Telefax (703) 685-0573

RJP/lrs